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Memorial Address

AT THE

Dedication of Monument

TO THE MEMORY OF

CAPT. SOLOMON PEIRCE

A Soldier of the Revolution

BY

ARTHUR W. PEIRCE

Old Cemetery, Arlington, Mass.

Wednesday, Sept. 2, 1903

TO THE MEMORY OF
1742 SOLOMON PEIRCE 1821
AND HIS WIFE
1743 AMITY FESSENDEN 1811
ERECTED BY THEIR DESCENDANTS A.D. 1903
SOLOMON PEIRCE
SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION
WOUNDED AT LEXINGTON
SERVED AT BUNKER HILL
SERGEANT AT SENNINGTON
FIRST LIEUTENANT — 1780
CAPTAIN 3RD. CO. 8TH. REG. M.V.M. 1784
PATRIOT SIRES TEACH CIVIC VIRTUE TO THEIR SONS

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THE TUFTS COLLEGE PRESS
1904

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L. A. Flagg.
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PREFACE

This little pamphlet is printed at the request of the descendants of Capt. Solomon Peirce and is dedicated to them. It is an attempt to bring back from the fragmentary records of the past the story of the life of a patriot ancestor, and to tell of his part in the great deeds that were the foundation of the American nation. Its preparation has been a source of great pleasure to the author. He owes thanks to many of the family for assistance that alone made it possible to prepare it. While the address was written for the occasion of the dedication of a monument to a Revolutionary ancestor, it will still better serve its purpose if it may quicken his descendants to a deeper interest in the historical past to which he belonged and to their civic duties as descendants of one who had an honored part in the first great struggle for American liberty. Worthy sons best honor patriot sires.

ARTHUR W PEIRCE.

Franklin, Mass., July, 1904.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

The heritage of a historic past of valor and honor was never more precious than in this land and in this day. As our country goes on from one degree of greatness to another; as her people spread out and take possession, not only of our own broad land, but reach out with beneficent power to lands across the sea; as prosperity increases and America becomes one of the great nations of the world, we are looking back ever more to the "days of the beginnings", when our sturdy ancestors fought their brave battles against oppression and, in the more peaceful walks of civic life, mapped out the working plans and models of a real and abiding democracy. Every step forward in the Nation's progress makes us realize the more, for how great a future those stalwart men were building. We honor the fathers of our Republic for their splendid deeds; we are grateful for the priceless heritage they left us. They were indeed a noble ancestry, if *not* an ancestry of the nobility,—those homespun sires of this great, free people.

The far-reaching desire to perpetuate the historic deeds and keep alive the memory of the men of the old days is abundantly attested by the wide spread interest in the work of patriotic societies like that of the Sons of the American Revolution, and in the growing tendency for great family organizations and reunions like that of the Fairbanks family held at Dedham last week. We give our testimony to the worth of this spirit by the pilgrimage we make today to this spot where we gather to pay our tribute to the memory of Solomon Peirce, the Revolutionary ancestor from whom we boast descent.

This occasion is unique in its setting and in its purpose. In years far back of the Revolution, the spot where we stand today was even then the church-yard burying-ground of the little community. Here "the rude forefathers of the hamlet

sleep." This was the North West Precinct of Cambridge; incorporated in 1732, better known in those days as Menotomy; made a separate town under the name of West Cambridge in 1807; and the name changed to Arlington in 1867. Where yonder church now stands, stood the village church from the beginning, and the early structure, transformed and rebuilt, still stands as a substantial mansion on this, "Pleasant Street." This was the Second Church in Cambridge, and here the man we honor worshipped as do some of his descendants to the sixth generation. Over the brook which flows through this burying-ground for many years stood the village schoolhouse where many of your ancestors "pursued with flagging feet the irksome path to knowledge."

And we are on historic ground as well. In front of us as in panoramic display was enacted a large part of one of the great dramas of our country's history. A horseman rides in the midnight through yonder street on the memorable eighteenth of April, 1775, and Paul Revere bears the "cry of alarm to every Middlesex village and farm." Later, past the little church, march the hostile British under Col. Smith; on this common an hour or two after, Captain Benjamin Locke musters in his Minute-men to follow in pursuit; and in full midday of the nineteenth comes Lord Percy with his troops and cannon, marching to the rescue of the first defeated and retreating column.

In front of this church and spot was made the first capture of troops and stores of the Revolution. A belated convoy of provisions and ammunition, following Lord Percy's troops, was ambushed and captured by the old men of Menotomy, too aged and infirm to be with their comrades at Lexington. Tradition says they were lead by a mulatto. Two of the British guards were killed and six were captured and the baggage wagons dragged to a convenient hollow beyond the present railway station. Along the shore of Spy Pond fled some

of the British soldiers, throwing their muskets into its waters. At Spring Valley, as the story goes, they meet Mother Batherick, calmly digging dandelions, and surrender to her for protection. She leads them to the house of Captain Ephraim Frost and in giving them up to some men there said "If ever you live to get back, you can tell King George that one old woman took six of his grenadiers prisoners." And the squib went the rounds of the opposition papers in England, "If one old Yankee woman can take six grenadiers, how long will it take to end the war?"*

At this point in front of us took place some of the hardest fighting of the day. From every wall and bush along the way, the eager Minute-men had pursued the British troops doggedly retreating, sorely pressed by the growing numbers of the patriots hurrying from all the surrounding towns. Here the Minute-men from Danvers, the vanguard of the Essex regiment, who had covered the sixteen miles in four hours, and fully half the way on the run, hurled themselves upon the British line and turned the retreat almost into a rout. Seven of the Danvers men fell in this town. Indeed, in this community more men were killed than in both Concord and Lexington. Under the tall monument in this church-yard sleep more of the patriot dead of that day than rest in any other town. In the fright and excitement of that perilous hour Jason Russell, Jason Winship, Jabez Wyman and nine others, unshrouded and uncoffined, are drawn by oxen on a sled and "head to point" are hastily buried side by side in a common grave. Nine of them slept there as unknown dead till only recently a diligent historian of our Revolutionary history has rescued their names from oblivion. Near the wall and along the brook, the old burial place of the slaves, were buried many of the British dead.

Just over the wall of this yard was the tree-embowered

* West Cambridge in 1775, Samuel Abbot Smith.

house that I can just remember, the home of the village preacher, good old Parson Cooke, who served this people for more than forty-four years from 1739 to 1784. This house, built in 1740, still stands, though much changed and on another site. It was a hospital on the day of the battle and was often used as such during the siege of Boston. It is literally true, as another has said, "On this very spot, British and American bullets once crossed each other with deadly aim." We are indeed on historic ground, hallowed by blood and sacrifice and made sacred to us by the thought that almost from the days of Governor Winthrop, this soil has been trodden by the feet of our ancestors, as they brought their dead to lay them here or as they loitered in the churchyard to discuss the crops and the neighborhood gossip in the long noonings between Parson Cooke's longer morning and afternoon sermons.

If the historic setting is unique, it well befits the unique purpose that brings us here. Revering and honoring a Revolutionary soldier, Solomon Peirce, we, his descendants, gather here to dedicate a monument, rugged and simple as the man himself, that shall stand as a memorial of his patriotism, a token of our grateful appreciation of his services to the cause of liberty, and a reminder to the present generation and to generations yet to be of the patriotism and civic virtue of our early history.

"This stone shall speak to children yet unborn
The deeds of men who made their country free."

The story of the building of this monument is a simple one. An interested descendant of Solomon Peirce, in the course of genealogical research, found that his grave, as well as that of his wife, was unmarked. Whether no stone was ever erected or whether time had destroyed it, we do not know. That this was the place of his burial, we have definite knowledge. Mrs. Amanda Peirce Morton, the tenth child of his son Jonas, was present at his funeral and pointed out the place before she died, two years ago, at the age of eighty-eight. Mrs. Marietta Peirce

Bailey, to whom the conception and realization of this memorial are almost entirely due, and to whose indefatigable energy and research we owe so much, set about to erect a memorial at this unmarked grave. She appealed to the descendants of the patriot for small sums for the purpose and a prompt response and a very deep interest resulted. Two hundred and twenty descendants of the man we honor have united in this tribute to his memory. His name and fame have been brought to the notice of us all, to some indeed who were unaware of their Revolutionary ancestry. All through the family there has been awakened a new impulse for research in family history and tradition, and new pride in the family name. We all of us owe a debt of gratitude to that member of the family who has given so generously of time and labor to make possible this enduring monument to a worthy name.

Solomon Pierce, the man we commemorate today, was born in Lexington June 15, 1742, the sixth in a family of eight children of Jonas and Abigail Comee Peirce. He was a descendant in the sixth generation of John Peirce, a weaver, of Norwich, England, who came to this country in 1637, probably in the ship "John and Dorothy" of Norwich. He settled in Watertown, where he was granted one lot and purchased three more, one his homestead of twelve acres. The fourth generation in line of descent, another John, seems to have pushed on to Waltham. The son of this man, Jonas, Solomon's father, married into a Lexington family, making Abigail Comee* his wife. They resided in Lexington and

* The Comee or Comey family were descendants of David Comee, who settled in Woburn, Mass., in 1663, and moved to Concord in 1664. This David was grandfather to Abigail, and he was killed during King Philip's War in a fight with the Indians at Sudbury, Mass., April 21, 1676. He came from Scotland in the "John and Sarah," and landed in Charlestown in 1652. He was descended from the ancient clan McIntosh and the traditional MacDuff, who overthrew Macbeth in 1057. Two of Abigail's grand-nephews, as well as her son Solomon, were in the battle of Lexington, Joseph Comee being shot in the church where he had gone for a new supply of powder. See Comee Genealogy by Allen H. Burt of Boston, 1896 and 1898.

Abigail's father, John Comee, married Martha Monroe, the eldest daughter of Wm. Monroe, descended from a distinguished Highland clan, who came from Scotland in 1652. See Hudson's History of Lexington.

there Solomon was born. Later, John, an older brother of Solomon, married and moved to Westminster, Massachusetts, and to that place the father and mother and some of the children seem to have followed and became the forbears of a large number of Peirces in Westminster, Gardner, Fitchburg and that vicinity. So far as I can find, Solomon seems to be the only one left behind in the migration of the family and at the time of the Revolution, he appears to be the only man of his name in Lexington. He married December 15, 1763, Amity Fessenden,* of an old Lexington family, whose birthday, June 15th, was curiously enough, that of her husband with a year's difference in age.

We know little of him previous to the Revolution. The Lexington town records show that he was Surveyor of Highways in 1772 and in the votes of the town, we find the following:

"Also accepted the return of Mr. Solomon Peirce, Surveyor of Highways and granted an order to pay him 17s, 6d for six days and 3 hours work more than his rate and for a cart belonging to Mr. John Bridge broke in the Town Service." In the same year, we find: "Granted an order to pay Solomon Peirce 2£, 6s in full for his carting Rev. Mr. Clarke's wood." He seems to have been a man of some means. The records of the County Registry of Deeds at East Cambridge (See Appendix) show that he acquired from his father Jonas, the next March after his marriage, 14 acres of land in that part of Lexington near Waltham, land which is now situated on Concord Ave., part of the so called 'Bryant' Place, the estate next west of the Kite End School House. Here was his home for many years and near him lived Capt. Parker, Bowman and

* Amity Fessenden was one of the fourth generation from Nicholas Fessenden of Cambridge, who was born in England about 1650, and died in Cambridge in 1719. It is said that he came over to inherit the property of a childless uncle, John Fessenden, who came from Canterbury, England, at an earlier date. Thomas Fessenden, son of Nicholas and grandfather of Amity, came to Lexington about 1708. See Hudson's History of Lexington.

other members of the Lexington Minute-men. In 1765 he bought 4 acres more adjoining. The deeds record him as a Cordwainer or Shoemaker by trade. He probably combined as did so many of the people of that day, a trade with his farming. After the Revolution in 1783 he bought considerable more land, practically the remainder of his father's old farm and 37 acres besides—all adjoining his original plot of land, giving him at one time a total of 95 acres. His name is found on many of the tax accounts of the town of Lexington with the number and value of his horses, cows, etc. and his real estate. In 1783 as recorded in the tax account he had a personal estate of 62£, and real estate of 344£, a not inconsiderable sum in those days. He was undoubtedly a farmer and day by day pursued the even tenor of his way in the countless details of the busy farmer's life.

From the obscurity of this quiet life, the events of 1775 bring him quickly into the light of history, for history was made in that little town of Lexington as it has rarely been made before. In every Massachusetts town, in that fateful year, companies of Minutemen were enrolled and drilled, and to the Lexington company, commanded by Captain Parker, a near neighbor, belonged Solomon Peirce, then an able-bodied man of thirty-three. In the gray light of the morning of the memorable April day, he stood with that little band of sixty or seventy patriots on Lexington Common to face the advancing column of eight hundred British troops. The story of that first stand for American Independence needs no repetition. You remember well the insulting command of Pitcairn, the brave words of Captain Parker, the scattering shots, the deadly volley and the dispersal of that gallant band of whom almost a quarter were killed or wounded. Among the latter was our ancestor, whose blood was part of that first baptism of blood that betokened the new birth of a great people. It will be remembered that on the morning of that battle Capt. Parker,

after waiting long for the appearance of the enemy, had dismissed his men for breakfast at the neighboring farm houses with the order that they were to reassemble at the first alarm. The British took the scouts sent out by Parker and were almost upon the common when the alarm was sounded, and only a few of the patriot band were ready to meet the on-coming enemy. All accounts agree that Solomon Peirce was wounded while getting over a wall hastening to join his company. He had been perhaps at the Bucknam Tavern near by, where many of the men from a distance took breakfast. His wound, probably in the ankle, although some tradition places it in the thigh, was not a serious one. At the dispersal of the little band he hobbled home. The wound was done up by his wife, using a bandana handkerchief, and it is said that he returned to the highway in Menotomy to take part with the Minute-men in the hazardous fire that pursued the British in that disastrous retreat. That the wound was not serious we know, because he was on duty at the Battle of Bunker Hill June 17th and 18th; but either on account of partial disability or as a matter of a military detail, he was stationed to guard the roads from Cambridge, perhaps to give warning of any flank movement from that direction.*

Toward the last of the siege of Boston, the military archives at the State House show that he served five days, March 4—8, 1776 at Dorchester Heights, as a member of John Bridge's Lexington Company.†

In the campaign against Burgoyne of 1777, he was sergeant in a Concord company of Colonel Sam. Ballard's regiment, under Capt. Geo. Minott, and the records attest that he traveled 220 miles in eleven days and that he was paid the sum of nine pounds, eleven shillings, and eight pence for service from August

* Massachusetts Archives. 146: 309.

† Massachusetts Archives. 17: 64.

16 to November 30 of that year.* Burgoyne surrendered October 17th. In 1780, June 7th, we find him made First Lieutenant of Capt. William Munroe's company, the 3rd Co. of the Third Middlesex Regiment of Mass. Militia under the command of Colonel Francis Faulkner.† Of this same company, after the war closed, then a part of the State Militia, he was made Captain July 25, 1784, the regiment being then under the command of Colonel Sam. Lamson of Weston. He resigned his commission and retired from the service, April 23, of the next year.‡ His long and generous service to his country is amply attested by unimpeachable records and is the special reason for our honoring him here today by this memorial stone.

After the war, he seems to have remained in Lexington until 1788. These later years in Lexington, however, were apparently years of financial misfortune. Though he bought considerable land in 1783 he evidently borrowed the money to do so. It was a dangerous time for such an experiment. You will remember how values were dissipated through the inflated paper currency of the time. The finances of the nation and of the individual were on a very unstable basis. In those times to buy a suit of clothes required an amount of paper money to be measured by the peck. The Worcester Spy preferred to take subscriptions in salt pork rather than in any paper money. You may read with profit John Fiske's chapter on the financial stress of the years, which he truly calls the critical period of our nation's history and from that we may learn what was possibly the reason for the financial misfortune of the man who had been prosperous. According to Fiske the worst feature of this financial state was a false and fleeting show of prosperity which was followed by sudden collapse and great hardship throughout New England. "Homesteads were sold for the

* Massachusetts Archives, 2: 217 and 21: 79.

† Massachusetts Archives, 28: 66.

‡ Massachusetts Roster, 1782-1788, page 42, Adj. Gen'l's Office.

payment of foreclosed mortgages, cattle was seized in distrainer and often the farmer himself was sent to jail." To borrow coin money to the amount of 400 oz. in such times and to have to pay it by currency of so little value might well be the reason for any man's financial downfall. Whatever be the cause he disposed of his property to Joseph Underwood the 26th day of November 1784.

His name disappears from the Lexington tax lists in 1788 and we find that this same year he and his wife Amity were received into the Second Precinct Church of Cambridge, now Arlington, from the church at Lexington. His life from this time on seems to be closely connected with that of his second child and oldest son, Jonas. He lived, when we have first knowledge of him in this town, in the so-called Amos Russell House, still standing, and which you may visit this afternoon, which belonged to his son Jonas, and which Jonas afterward sold to Amos Russell, the husband of his sister Elizabeth, or Betsy. Jonas, after living in various places, the so called Marsh Place on the edge of what is now Belmont, the Winning Farm on the edge of Lexington and Woburn, now used as a summer outing home for poor children, the afore-mentioned Amos Russell House, bought March 12th, 1803, one hundred years ago, the large farm composing the whole of what is now Arlington Heights, for many years thereafter known as Peirce's Hill. The property was then called Spring Hill Farm and was formerly owned by the well known Appleton family of Boston and used as a sort of country home. Jonas bought of Thomas Perkins, who married a daughter of Nathaniel Appleton. The purchase included about two hundred and fifty acres, a mansion house, a smaller house and barn, a piece of land called the Bear Hill Pasture and a piece of salt marsh on the Cambridge river. To the smaller house, from the Amos Russell House, he later brought his father and

mother, Solomon and Amity, and there they lived for many years.

It was a beautiful situation with an expanse of view unequalled in the neighborhood of Boston. On the extreme top of the hill, the highest point of the farm, where now stands the stand-pipe of the Metropolitan Water Commission and where we shall later go for our reunion, a park was laid out by the Appletons and trees planted in a circle, from which this crest was long called Circle Hill. It was surrounded by a fence with an ornamental gateway, called Charlotte's Gate after Appleton's daughter Charlotte.

For this property Jonas paid $9,750 and in less than seven years he had paid the mortgages and held it clear of all incumbrance. For nearly a century the hill remained in the possession of the family. In this old Mansion House, long since destroyed to make room for a newer residence, Solomon Peirce died in October, 1821, surviving his wife ten years, during which he lived with his son Jonas. Both lie buried side by side under or near this stone.

Such is the brief record of this man's life, gathered together after many years of almost oblivion for the satisfaction and profit of his descendants. I would that we could unlock the archives of the forgotten past to read the whole story of his long life, of which we get but fleeting glimpses. He was a man of the people; a soldier of his country, winning honor for himself and a place among the Nation's heroes. Time and place gave him a great opportunity; his was the readiness of the Minute-men of 1775. Honor to his memory!

This, doubtless, seems to some the record of far-distant time; yet it is a witness of the really brief span of our country's history, that the chasm between Solomon Peirce and today is so easily bridged. The wife of his son Jonas, Lydia Prentiss Peirce, with whom he lived as an old man, lived till 1865, surviving her husband thirty-three years and dying at 94. She

was the last survivor of those who remember the Battle of Lexington, and from her lips have been preserved many of the details of the part played by West Cambridge men in that battle. It was at her father's house that the women and children on the line of march found refuge on that day. Many here present have visited her, in the old house still standing on the corner of Grove Street, where she lived after her husband's death, and have heard from her lips the story of the old days.

But the nearest descendants to Solomon we know, now living, the last survivors of their generation, are Mrs. Adeline True of Everett, Mrs. Elmira Storer of Arlington, and Mrs. Mary Ann Peirce Thompson of Dorchester. Mrs. True is a granddaughter of Solomon, the daughter of his youngest son William. She is 87 years old and had long looked forward to sharing this day with us; but a fall and a broken hip, received last March, prevent. She well remembers Solomon Peirce, and his visits to her father's house and recalls that her mother used often to braid his hair in a queue. Were she present today, she would be for us the connecting link between our Revolutionary ancestor and our own day. Mrs. Storer is the daughter of Samuel Peirce and is 84. Mrs. Thompson is of the Leonard Peirce branch and is 88.

Of the same generation, but not of the direct descent, is the oldest person here today, Mrs. Harriet Locke Peirce, in her 90th year, the wife of Thomas P. Peirce, a grandson of Solomon. Mrs. Thaddeus Peirce, Jr., the daughter-in-law of Solomon's son Thaddeus, is living at an advanced age. The oldest lineal descendant present is Mrs. Melinda Grant Corliss, 77 years old, Solomon's great-grand-daughter. She brings with her for your inspection one of the few relics of Solomon's household, a pewter platter bearing the initials of his wife, "A. F." (Amity Fessenden). It happens, too, that the youngest in attendance is her great-grand-daughter, one year old, the seventh generation from Solomon and Amity.

The descendants of our ancestor and his wife have been numerous, so far as we can gather facts, they number of the living over seven hundred. They had twelve children, eight sons and four daughters, all but one of whom, who died in infancy, lived to be married. They were as follows :

CHILDREN OF SOLOMON AND AMITY PEIRCE.

1. Amity, b. 1765 ; m,—Harrington; m. 2d John Goodwin; d. 1829.
2. Jonas, b. 1766; m. Lydia Prentiss, dau. Geo. Prentiss; b. April, 1771; d. Sept., 1865. He d. Jan. 1833.
3. Abiel, b. 1768; m. Peggy Russell, 1789; m. 2d Anna Kingman, 1801; m. by Rev. Peter Thacher both times; Abiel d. 1816 and was buried Copp's Hill, new ground.
4. Solomon, b. 1770; m. Polly Green, 1794; m. by Rev. John Clark.
5. Samuel, b. 1772; m. Sophia Stedman; b. 1777; d. 1841. He d. May, 1861.
6. Abijah, b. 1775; m. Mary Prentiss, sister of Lydia; 2d m. Lucy Emery of Winchendon. He d. Oct., 1843.
7. Betsy, b. 1777; m. Amos Russell, 1793; b. 1768; d. 1828. She died March, 1844.
8. Lucy, b. 1779; m. Josiah Ditson of Boston, 1797; d. 1859.
9. Thaddeus, b. 1781; m. Lucy Learned; b. 1780; d. 1837. He d. April, 1838.
10. Leonard, b. 1783; m. Relief Allen, 1803; b. 1784; d. 1845. He d. 1846.
11. William, b. 1786; m. Elizabeth Floyd, b. 1778; d. 1816; m. 2d. Sarah Perkins; b. 1789; d. 1859; m. 3d. Caroline M. Mansfield; b. 1802; d. 1882. He d. March, 1878, age 92.*

* A very great amount of work has already been put into the preparation of a complete genealogical table of the descendants of Solomon Peirce and it is hoped to have it published as soon as it is completed. All data should be sent to Mrs. Marietta Peirce Bailey, 1172 Mass. Ave., Arlington, Mass.

Compared with some families, the Peirces have not been a migratory race and today a large part of the descendants live in or near this town, which is only a few miles from the town where the first of the name settled; most of them live in old Middlesex; and very few outside of this state. Only now and then a member of the family has wandered to the great West or South, and we are still essentially what we have always been, a New England family of the sturdy stock that swell the ranks of the common people of this country, the bone and sinew of the Nation's life.* Here in Old New England our stock still sends down its strong roots into soil watered by the sweat, and tears, and blood of twelve generations of an honored name.

Members of the Peirce family gathered here, ours is a priceless heritage of ancestry. It means much when there is handed down to a community the inspiring traditions of heroic deeds and self-sacrificing patriotism. The old common at Lexington lends a perpetual and splendid glory to that quiet town. The events that took place in this community where so many brave men met a soldier's death, add a dignity and prestige to the place beyond all the wealth of stocks and bonds, or commodities, or beautiful public buildings. The tide of civic pride runs higher, the pulse beats quicker, and the fires of patriotic devotion burn brighter, because we catch the spirit of the deeds done within these borders. We are or have been citizens of no mean city.

And so with us as a family, the story of the man we honor today is in a measure, our story. It is a part and a glorious part of our birthright. The fact that he drew sword in the service of his country in that first struggle for liberty that made us a free people, is our great heritage, our perpetual inspiration.

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* There are, of course, exceptions to this statement. A grandson of Leonard, born in Medford, went South before the war, and was the father of fifteen children. A large number of his descendants are still living in the South. We know that descendants of Solomon Peirce are living in 21 different states from Maine to California. The general statement made above is, however, notably true.

It calls us to duty and service. We may not wield the sword, but, in the walks of peace, there still are opening to us abundant opportunities for the patriot's service and the patriot's devotion. Worthy sons best honor patriot sires.

And so, we, gathered here today, amid historic scenes, the representatives of an honorable name, do dedicate this monument to Captain Solomon Peirce, a memorial to a soldier and patriot of the American Revolution, a token of our respect for his memory and our honor of his deeds, and a reminder to the youth of today and of the great future that to serve one's country well is ever the supreme and blessed duty of the true American.

"On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set today a votive stone;
That memory may his deeds redeem
When, like our sires, our sons are gone."

DIXIT ET FECIT.

(Motto on Peirce family coat of arms.)

WRITTEN FOR MONUMENT DEDICATION
BY
ESTHER BAILEY.

He spoke, and ever at the uttered word,
On eager feet went boldly forth to do.
Few were the words ; in deeds his will must speak.
Peaceful he walked his humble daily round.

His country called and swift his answer came,
Staunchly he stood on Lexington's broad green,
To shed his blood and echo Parker's cry,
"If they mean war, here let the war begin."

So on he went, his weapon still clasped firm,
To Charlestown's height, to Bennington's far fields,
Again with Washington's brave host enrolled,
And last, with peace, to daily task at home.

O patriot sire ! How can we honor thee—
We, honored now and ever by thy deeds ?
This stone we raise to teach thy loyal sons
That they must pay the debt in deeds like thine.

Say not he *was*, 'tis we are dead indeed,
If blind to duty, deaf to nation's need,
We cry not boldly, "Still our country calls!
Dixit et Fecit. Let his blood speak now!"

APPENDIX A.

ABSTRACT OF RECORDS, AT EAST CAMBRIDGE REGISTRY OF DEEDS OF PROPERTY OF CAPT. SOLOMON PEIRCE OF LEXINGTON.

MADE BY J. A. BAILEY, JR.

On January 10, 1731 by deed of that date Jonas Peirce, the father of Solomon Peirce, purchased of Joseph White of Lexington for the sum of Two hundred (200) Pounds, Forty (40) acres of land,* bounded Southerly by the Town highway: Westerly by a stone wall; Northerly by land of John Stone, and bounded further on land of Underwood and Wellington. In this deed, which is recorded in Book 34 Page 20, Jonas Peirce is described as a cordwainer of Lexington. This tract of Forty (40) acres was the first parcel purchased by the Peirce family in the locality which later became the home of Solomon Peirce.

In 1749 Jonas Peirce of Lexington, cordwainer, (spelled "corwainer") for Five hundred (500) pounds old tenor, bought of Joshua Warren of Waltham Fourteen (14) acres in Lexington, bounded Easterly and Northerly on Benjamin Smith; Westerly on John Stone; and Southerly on Joseph Underwood, Jr. This parcel adjoined, or was near to, the parcel of Forty (40) acres which had been purchased by Jonas Peirce in 1731.

By deed dated March 22, 1764 Jonas Peirce of Lexington, cordwainer, in consideration of Seventy (70) pounds paid by Solomon Peirce of Lexington, cordwainer, conveyed to Solomon Peirce Fourteen (14) acres, partly upland and partly

* This tract of Forty (40) acres is a portion of the farm known as the "Bryant Place," on Concord Avenue in the town of Lexington, being the estate next west of the Kite End Schoolhouse.

meadow land, bounded Easterly and Northerly on Smith: Westerly on Stone; and Southerly on land of Joseph Underwood, Jr., "together with the Northerly side of my dwelling house in Lexington aforesaid, being a new lean-to with the land on which the said lean-to stands, with sufficient yard-room and privilege to use and improve the same with the liberty of using and improving the well belonging to said house and also eleven feet of my barn in said Lexington, etc." This was the fourteen-acre parcel purchased by Jonas Peirce of Joshua Warren in 1749. The wife of Jonas Peirce, Abigail Peirce, signed by mark.

By deed dated 1765 Solomon Peirce bought of B. Smith et. al. Four (4) acres adjoining the above described Fourteen (14) acres. By deed dated 1783 Solomon Peirce bought of E. Munroe et al. Seven (7) acres adjoining the above Fourteen (14) acres. By deed dated 1783 Solomon Peirce bought of Jonas Peirce Forty (40) acres adjoining the above Fourteen (14) acres, this Forty-acre lot being the premises bought by Jonas Peirce of Joseph White in 1731. By deed dated 1783 Solomon Peirce bought of Ezekiel Hall Thirty (30) acres adjoining the above described Fourteen (14 acres.)

Solomon Peirce had therefore acquired by five deeds,—

14 acres
4 "
7 "
40 "
30 "

making a total of 95 acres

It appears that Solomon Peirce was obliged to borrow money to make his purchases of 1783, for in that year by bond and mortgage recorded in Book 83 Page 331, he gave a bond to the amount of Eight hundred (800) ounces of coined silver to secure Four hundred (400) ounces of coined silver to Elizabeth Gray of Boston. This would be called today a mortgage of

Four hundred (400) ounces of coined silver. This mortgage has never been discharged on the records, but undoubtedly was paid.

In 1784 Solomon Peirce deeded about Ninety (90) acres of his land for the express consideration of Four hundred (400) pounds to J. Chandler, Treasurer of the Town of Lexington, and in the same year, 1784, he conveyed a portion of his land to Thomas Fessenden and Matthew Bridge. What the purpose of these conveyances was, is not clear, but it would seem that they were made as security for money loaned or some such purpose, because later in the same year, 1784, J. Chandler, Treasurer, and Thomas Fessenden, and Matthew Bridge reconveyed to Solomon Peirce all that he had conveyed to them. (See Book 88 Page 122.)

By deed dated November 26, 1784 Solomon Peirce sold to Joseph Underwood his entire farm of Ninety-five (95) acres with his mansion house and barn, this being the main portion of the present Bryant Estate on Concord Avenue, Lexington. This estate remained in the Underwood family from 1784 until about 1860 or 1865, and was then conveyed to Mrs. Bryant, who now owns it.

From the records it seems that Solomon Peirce did not own any land after the sale of his farm in 1784. In 1770 he had received a deed from S. Fessenden of one moiety in three (3) tracts of land of Twenty-six (26) acres, Twelve (12) acres, and Fourteen (14) acres, but this seems to have been conveyed by him in 1774 and 1776 by deeds to B. Wellington and J. Williams, recorded respectively in Book 75 Page 428 and Book 77 Page 240.

In signing deeds, the wife of Solomon Peirce spelled her name Amitty Peirce. Solomon Peirce, like his father, Jonas, is described in all the early deeds as a cordwainer, later he is described as a yeoman [farmer], and in the last deed as a genteelman [gentleman].

Concord Avenue, which is the present name of the street on which the Jonas Peirce and Solomon Peirce homestead was located, was constructed in 1804. The portion of Concord Avenue in front of the Peirce Estate, was, however, a part of the old and crooked road which ran from Lexington to Waltham. Traces of this road may be seen through the fields and woods where it comes to Concord Avenue, east of the Peirce Homestead, and comes out of Concord Avenue, west of the Peirce Homestead near the Cutler Place, so-called. In building Concord Avenue portions of the old road were used in several other places as well as in front of the Peirce Homestead.

The following, the deed of Solomon's property to Joseph Underwood, will be of interest :—

Know All Men by these Presents that I Solomon Peirce of Lexington in the County of Middlesex & Commonwealth of Massachusetts Genteelman for & in consideration of the sum of three hundred Eighty Pounds L money to me in Hand paid by Joseph Underwood of said Lexington in the County and Commonwealth above said Bricklayer have given granted bargained sold and relinquished and by these Presents do give grant bargain sell & convey to said Joseph Underwood his Heirs & Assigns forever my farm in said Lexington consisting of one Mansion House & Barn together with about Ninety five Acres of land be the same more or less together with all the out houses privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging butted & bounded as followeth to it, Southerly on the Town Road Westerly on the lands of the heirs of Joseph White deceased as the wall now stands to where Moses Reeds land Corners then on lands of the Heirs of Joseph Bridge deceased to the Stake & Stone in the Fence then there running East and bounding North on Lydia Harrington as the stake now stands to William Smith's or Joseph Smith's land then Easterly on said Smith's to a tall pine in the swamp about four Rods then on said Smith to the Ditch then on Joseph Smith the Widow Anna Smith & Benjamin

Smith to a Corner Easterly on said Benjamin Smith Anna Smith then Southerly on William Smith to a pine in the swamp marked W. then southerly on said William Smith to Stump & Stone where Daniel Harrington licked William Smith then the same Course to two small maples marked then Easterly on said William Smith and Jonathan Smith to the first mentioned Bounds or however otherways bounded or reputed to be bounded To Have And To Hold the said described Premises to the said Joseph Underwood his Heirs Administrators Executors or Assigns forever to his & their Use & Behoof forever with all the priviledges & appurtenances thereto belonging And I do covenant with the said Joseph Underwood that I am lawfully seized & possessed of the Premises and that I have good right to sell the same to Joseph Underwood & his assigns forever & that they are free & clear of all Incumbrances And that I will Warrant & defend the same to the said Joseph Underwood & his Assigns forever against the lawful Claims and Demands of all persons whatsoever In Testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand & Seal with Amity, my wife in token of her consent & relinquishment of her Dower this twenty six Day of November one thousand seven hundred & eighty four & in the ninth year of the Independance of America Solomon & Seal Amitty Peirce & Seal Signed sealed and delivered in Presence of us Nelly Fessenden Francis Bowman Middlesex ss : November 26, 1784 The above named Solomon & Amitty personally appeared & acknowledged the above instrument to be their voluntary Act & Deed Before me Robert Harrington Justice Peace Middlesex ss Cambridge November 29 1784 22 minutes after 9 o'Clock A.M. Received & Entered

By Thad Mason Reg.

APPENDIX B.

The following articles belonging to Solomon Peirce and his wife are still in existence. It is possible that there may be others, not yet brought to our attention :—

Solomon Peirce's gun, which he used during the Revolutionary War, is in the possession of Edward A. Hodge, Medford, Massachusetts, a descendant of Solomon's son Samuel. It came to the present owner from his uncle Charles Edward Peirce of Medford, Mass. *

A plate, mended with putty, in the possesion of Mrs. Susan Peirce Hodge, Amesbury, of the same branch of the family.

A large pewter platter with the initals A. F. (Amity Fessenden) is the property of Mrs. Melinda Grant Corliss of Billerica, Mass., a descendant in the Jonas Peirce branch. She has also a cherry dining table of the old style, which came to her mother after Solomon's death.

Small, round, solid, cherry table, called in the family, "the light stand," in possession of Eben F. Peirce, Leominster, Mass.

A "camphire" bottle, once the property of Amity Peirce, belongs to Mrs. B. Tappan Floyd, Winthrop, Mass., of the Thaddeus Peirce branch.

A half-dozen silver spoons are the property of Mrs. Peirce Frederick, of Charlestown, also of the Thaddeus Peirce descent.

† It was the idea to hand it down to the eldest son. Charles Peirce of Amesbury, was eldest son of Samuel. Charles Edward, eldest son of Charles, was born and died in Medford, without children. Edward A. Hodge son of Susan Peirce Hodge is the eldest in that line.

NOTE

An association recently organized aims to bring into closer union the descendants of Solomon Peirce. Its objects are as stated in the constitution:—"To bring into closer union the descendants of Solomon Peirce ; to provide for occasional family reunions ; to collect and publish historical and genealogical matter relating to the family ; and in every way to promote historical knowledge and the spirit of kinship." All lineal descendants of Solomon Peirce of Lexington, together with wives and husbands of said descendants are eligible to membership. The fee is only $1. and includes the membership of husband and wife and all minor children. It would be a great help to the association, if everyone eligible would become a member. There are no annual dues. Membership blanks may be obtained by addressing Mrs. Marietta Peirce Bailey, 1172 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, Mass.

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